1974 - Haj Amin el-Husseini died July 5, 1974
BEIRUT, Lebanon, July 41-Haj Amin el-Husseini, the former Grand Mufti of Jerusalem and a veteran Palestinian political leader, died here today at the age of 80.
An announcement by his physicians gave the cause of death as heart failure, He was admitted to the American University Hospital two days ago suffering from cardiac trouble. He is to be buried here tomorrow.
The Grand Mufti, who was popularly known as Haj Amini had been living at a villa in a Beirut suburb since he left his exile in Cairo in 1959.
Headed Dissident Factions
The Mufti was one of the most powerful Arab leaders for 30 years after World War I, his influence declined when such Moslem leaders as President Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt came into power. President Nasser headed a populous nation in arms whereas the Mufti had headed only dissident factions.
Although the title Mufti designates an expounder of Islamic law and there were any number of muftis, Haj Amin elHussein, Mufti of Jerusalem, became “The Mufti.” He was a figure of violent controversy.
His close followers considered him something like a Moslem saint. His enemies saw him as a genocidal assassin. Foremost among his enemies were the Jews of Palestine and later of the State of Israel. To these the Mufti offered implacable opposition.
In 1952 the Mufti explained his position on the Israeli-Arab dispute in an interview with a writer for a magazine in the United States. He said he considered that the land of the Palestinian Arabs had been unjustly seized by the Israelis. This land, he pointed out, had belonged to the non-Jewish peoples of Palestine since Biblical times.
“No unjust or unfair solution can be accepted,” the Mufti said. “No man will

accept anything in exchange for his country.”

The case against the Mufti was widely and vehemently stated, he was called an incurable conspirator who supported wholesale murder. It was charged that while he was in Germany during World War 11 he had collaborated in plans for the extermination of the Jews in Nazi-controlled territory.

When he was in power in the turbulent affairs of the Middle East, he was described as a handsome and soft-spoken Moslem gentleman. One journalist said his face was that of “a jolly elf.” He had keen and often smiling blue eyes. His close-clipped beard was reddish when he was a young man. He usually wore the impressive black, gold-lined flowing robe of a Moslem religious leader.

He was born in Jerusalem in 1893, studied in Turkish schools, including a Turkish military academy, and spent a year at Al Ahzar, Cairo”s famous Moslem university, In World War I he was an artillery officer in the Turkish Army, was captured by the British and joined the British-sponsored Arab revolt against the Ottoman Empire.

In 1920, apparently as a reward for his services to the British, he was appointed a minor customs official in Jerusalem. He also taught in a Moslem school. On the nomination of Sir Herbert Samuel, later Viscount Samuel, who was the British High Commissioner to the League of Nations-mandated territory of Palestine, Haj Amin became “Grand” Mufti of Jerusalem. Before the year was out he had turned against the British. He was sentenced in absentia to 10 years’ imprisonment for instigating the city”s first large-scale anti-Zionist riots.

Thereupon the Mufti began a period of wandering. His affairs were complicated because he was pursued not only by the British and by factions sympathetic to the Zionists but also by the devious age-old enmities between families and factions of the Moslem world.

He lived successively in Jordan, then Transjordania, Iraq and Iran. His movements had about them a cloak-and-dagger quality that caused some Moslem leaders to say he had fallen in love with conspiracies for their own sake. Nevertheless, the British believed that his influence was still a major factor in Arab recalcitrance in Palestine.

Collaborated With Nazis

During World War 11 the Mufti, as he put it, sought refuge with the “enemies of my enemies” in Berlin. Documents obtained in Germany after the war gave indications that he had been a willing collaborator with the Nazis. A widely circulated photograph showed him reviewing a contingent of Moslem “stormtroopers” in Bosnia.

When the Nazis were defeated, Haj Amin found refuge with King Farouk in Egypt, his asylum being extended under the regimes of Maj. Gen. Mohammed Naguib and President Nasser. There he worked with Egypt against King Abdullah of Jordan. After King Abdullah’s assassination, his grandson, King Hussein, vainly invited the former Mufti of Jerusalem to return.

Amin—the title Haj is given Moslems who make the pilgrimage to Mecca—moved his headquarters to Beirut when he disagreed with President Nasser on anti-Israeli strategy. In Lebanon he lived in a tightly guarded compound—he had as many enemies among the Arabs as among the Israelis—of luxurious villas In the suburb of Mansourieh, moving about with the aid of a fleet of American Made limousines.

Until his death he was head of the Arab Higher Committee for Palestine, the body that lost the direction of the Arab struggle against Israel to the Palestine Liberation Organization. He also headed the Pakistan-based World Islamic Congress, which he formed in 1931.

Haj Amin lived in obscurity except for the brief periods when he served as Palestine delegate to Moslem conferences in half a dozen Middle Eastern and

Far Eastern cities.